

CB wherein said single atmospheric transferring device has a mechanism for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, a substrate between said cassette which is mounted on said cassette table and said atmospheric loader, and a mechanism for carrying in and carrying out, one by one, said substrate between said atmospheric loader and said two lock chambers, and

wherein said opening and closing devices have structure causing the opening and closing devices to open and close every carrying-in of a substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of a substrate, one by one, from one of the two lock chambers.

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims, subsequent to issuance of the Notice of Allowance mailed October 13, 2000, in order to further clarify the definition of the present invention. Specifically, independent method claim 1 has been amended to recite that the method uses an atmospheric loader including, inter alia, opening and closing devices, provided at the two lock chambers and being opened and closed every carrying-in the substrate to one of the two lock chambers and every carrying-out the substrate from one of the two lock chambers; and to recite that in using the single atmospheric transferring device, the opening and closing devices are opened and closed every carrying-in of the substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of the substrate, one by one, from one of the two lock

chambers.

The two independent apparatus claims, claims 9 and 17, have been amended to recite that the apparatus includes the opening and closing devices, as mentioned previously, and to recite that the opening and closing devices have structure causing the opening and closing devices to open and close every carrying-in of a substrate, one by one, to one of the two lock chambers, and every carrying-out of a substrate, one by one, from one of the two lock chambers.

Clearly, the presently amended claims are supported by Applicants' original disclosure; note, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6, and the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8, of Applicants' specification. Note also, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10, the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12, and the first full paragraph on page 12, of Applicants' specification.

Also being submitted concurrently herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, and necessary Petition, for having the Examiner consider two documents only recently discovered in connection with the subject matter of the above-identified application.

Initially, it is respectfully requested that the present amendments be entered. It is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary in order that the invention present be defined with sufficient clarity to form an adequate basis for an enforceable contract. That is, particularly in view of the presently submitted documents, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary to clarify

the subject matter of the present invention.

Moreover, noting the claims as previously allowed, and that the present amendments clearly further define the invention, more specifically defining the subject matter in each of the independent claims, and also noting the presently submitted documents provided under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments require no substantial amount of additional work on the part of the office. In this regard, and as mentioned previously, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary in order to further clarify the definition of the present invention, in light of, for example, the presently submitted documents. Noting that the present amendments further clarify subject matter in all of the present claims, by defining further structure, and operation of such structure, such structure being the opening and closing devices, it is respectfully submitted that the newly amended claims will require no additional search or examination, and are allowable at least in light of the newly added recitations in the present claims.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are timely. In this regard, noting in particular the presently submitted documents in the concurrently filed Information Disclosure Statement, it is respectfully submitted that these documents were only recently discovered, and thus the need for the present amendments only became clear after discovery of the submitted documents and understanding of the pertinence thereof.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the necessary showing under 37 CFR 1.312 has been made. Accordingly, entry of the present amendments, and, after consideration of the concurrently filed documents, issuance of a U.S. patent based upon the above-identified application, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414V17) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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